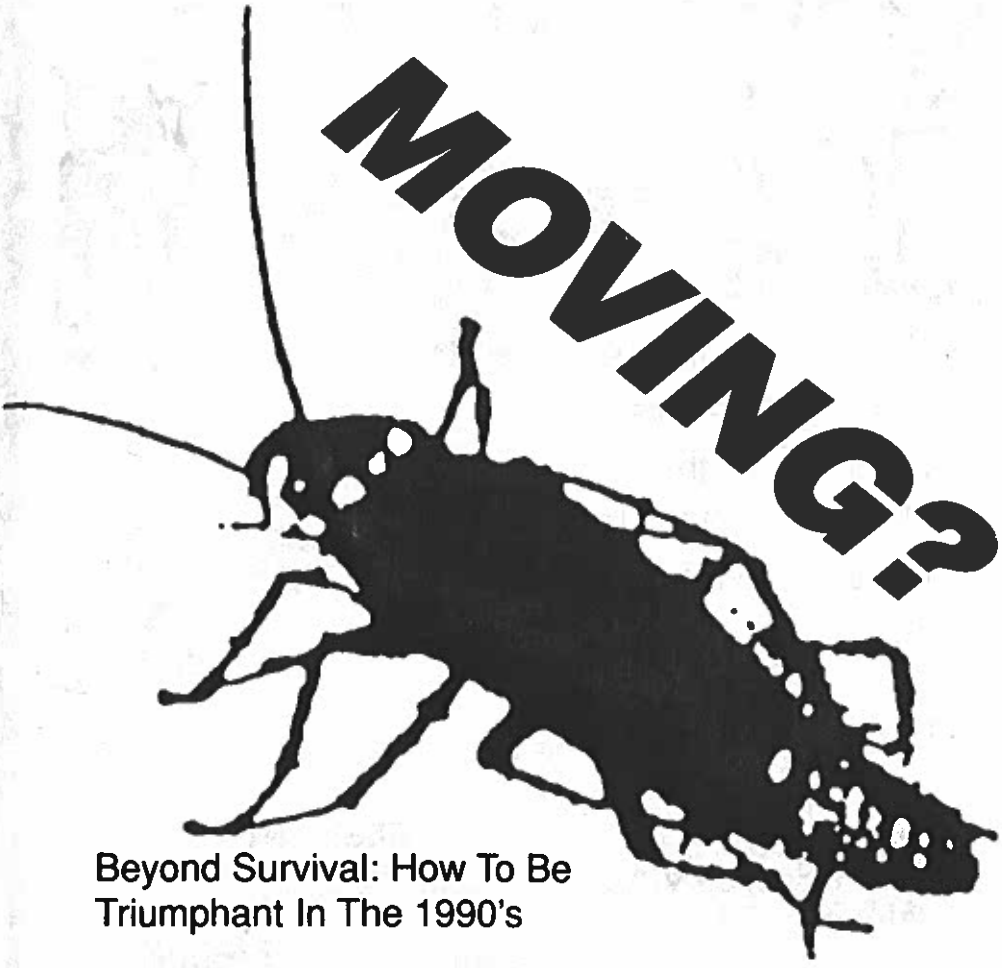
Discover The Coming Decade

$1.
one dollar.

#7
Whatever.

Life is a Joke



Beyond Survival: How To Be Triumphant In The 1990's

"No one ever said moving or temporarily relocating was easy. With all that you've had to do to get ready for your move, the last thing we want you to worry about is receiving your mail at your new address. We know that forms can be confusing, but if you'll take a few moments to read the instructions on the inside of this flap and follow the advice, we'll take special care to ensure that your mail is properly forwarded. The U.S. Postal Service is committed to giving superior service and we want to carry on that tradition at your new address." Best wishes!

Postmaster General

Welcome to the new Life is a Joke. I've moved twice since the publication of the last one. It is an experience. Inspiring.

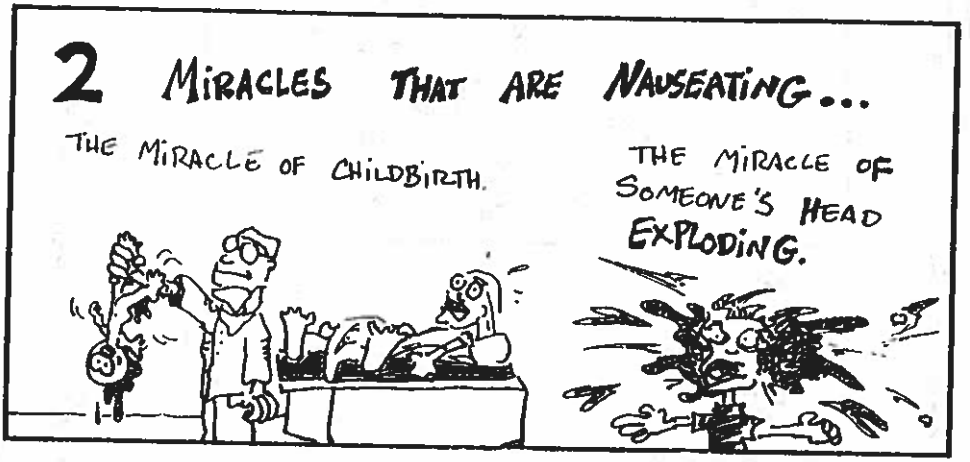
Thanks to all who helped with my life...

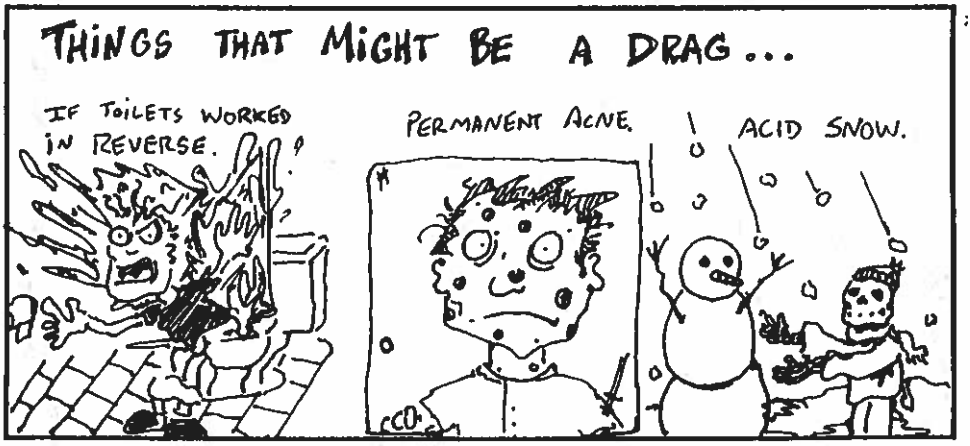
Joe Franke:
18320 Napa St. #2
Northridge, CA 91325
(818) 701-1256

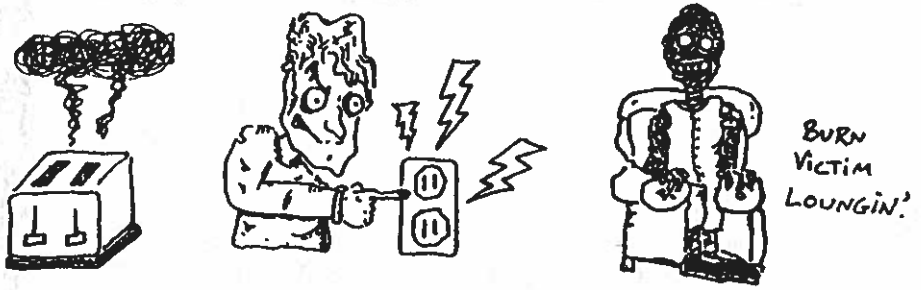
RESIDENT
Life is a Joke • Joe Franke
2288 Hawk, Simi Valley, CA 93065

Dedicated to Angela...

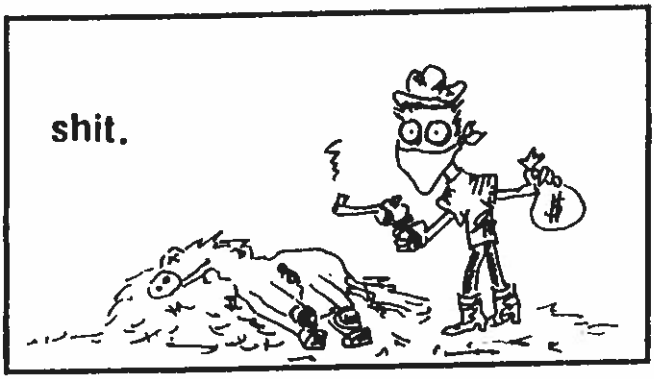
Here I am, once again,like an infinite amount of times before. [redacted] thinking. Holding an empty court in the corner of the living room. I am not usually in the living room. Normally, you'll find me in the "dying room" -my bedroom.







I've got this indentation in the middle of my chest. Large. About enough that one could put part of his/her fist in. Had it since I was very young. "The Hole," we called it. Figured it out a while back. It's where my heart would have been.



Two friends and I were driving to a concert. The place was in Hollywood, on Hollywood boulevard, we didn't know where exactly. I'm in the front passenger seat looking at buildings. A billboard catches my eye. There is a woman on it. Not a woman's picture on it, but an actual woman standing atop this billboard. I point this out to my friends. We agree that this woman is probably about to commit suicide. We try to park the car. As we're circling around, I can't take my eyes off this woman about to dive to her death.

She jumps. She falls through my limited scope of vision, many stories up. Damn, I say. I just saw a woman kill herself. We park. As I'm walking to the club with my friends, I can't stop thinking about this death I have witnessed. I accept it with a placid inevitability. Nevertheless, fuck.

We turn the corner. In front of us is a film crew and one of those inflatable bag-things stunt people dive into. The woman is neither dead nor hurt and is standing nearby.

What if the club wasn't where it was, and we passed it on by? I would have spent the rest of my life thinking I saw someone die before my eyes. How about that? I guess that's Hollywood.

The Chauffer

Was riding the bus into the San Fernando Valley on Thursday afternoon. The bus was empty excluding the driver and I. I was the only passenger on the bus. I had my own driver! This bus costs tens of thousands of dollars... style. My chauffer. I had my chauffer take me to the corner of Mason and Devonshire where I would get out and walk a mile and a half or so to transfer. I needed the air. "Thanks," I said, "The rest of the day is yours."

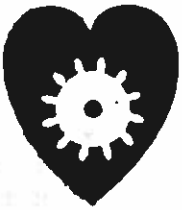
We got in the car.
I'd stepped in dogshit on the way in.
It was indeed a terrible smell.
Managed to get it out of there
with loose napkins
not the smell
that remained.
(and how.)
In the parking lot of a supermarket
We had beer we'd bought.
Poured it
On my shoes, and on the step
just inside the car door
The car,
(Van, rather)
smelled like beer.
But,
it was better than smelling like shit.
We agreed
and baptised the vehicle.

I'd lost a toothbrush. Got a replacement. It was my brother's. He didn't need it anymore. O.K. after a while, I'd used it for a long time, ten times the amount he'd used it, in fact. Now was it ninety percent mine and ten percent his? or was it mine? This transcends possession. Eventually it will be entirely mine, and he will have only used it for a short time at the beginning of its career.

J

If I scream for a long time, real real loudly, in fact, so loudly that I go deaf and can't hear myself scream anymore, am I really screaming? Do I make a noise?

I am god-fearing
and for good reason.



EVIL

Bought some napkins
with American flags printed on them
for the bathroom.

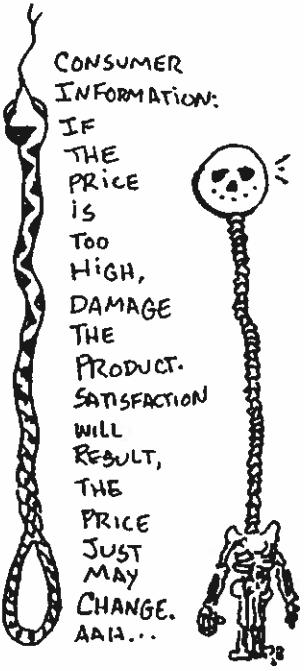
• • •

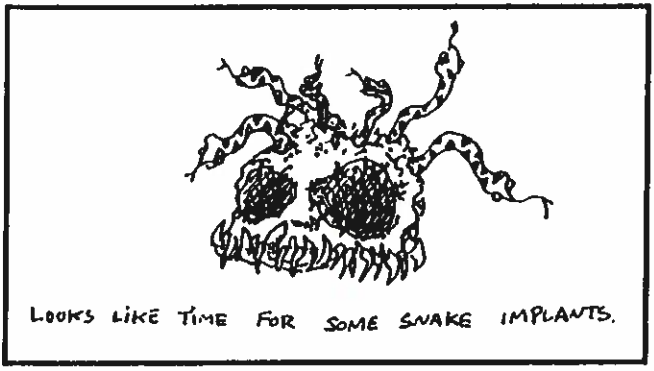
She said
"Live every day like it were your last."
I agreed
and told her that I already did.
"Really?" she asked.
"Oh yeah," I said,
"That's why I have credit cards."

I have a pimple on my nose.
(dead center)
It proves the true symmetry of nature.

• • •

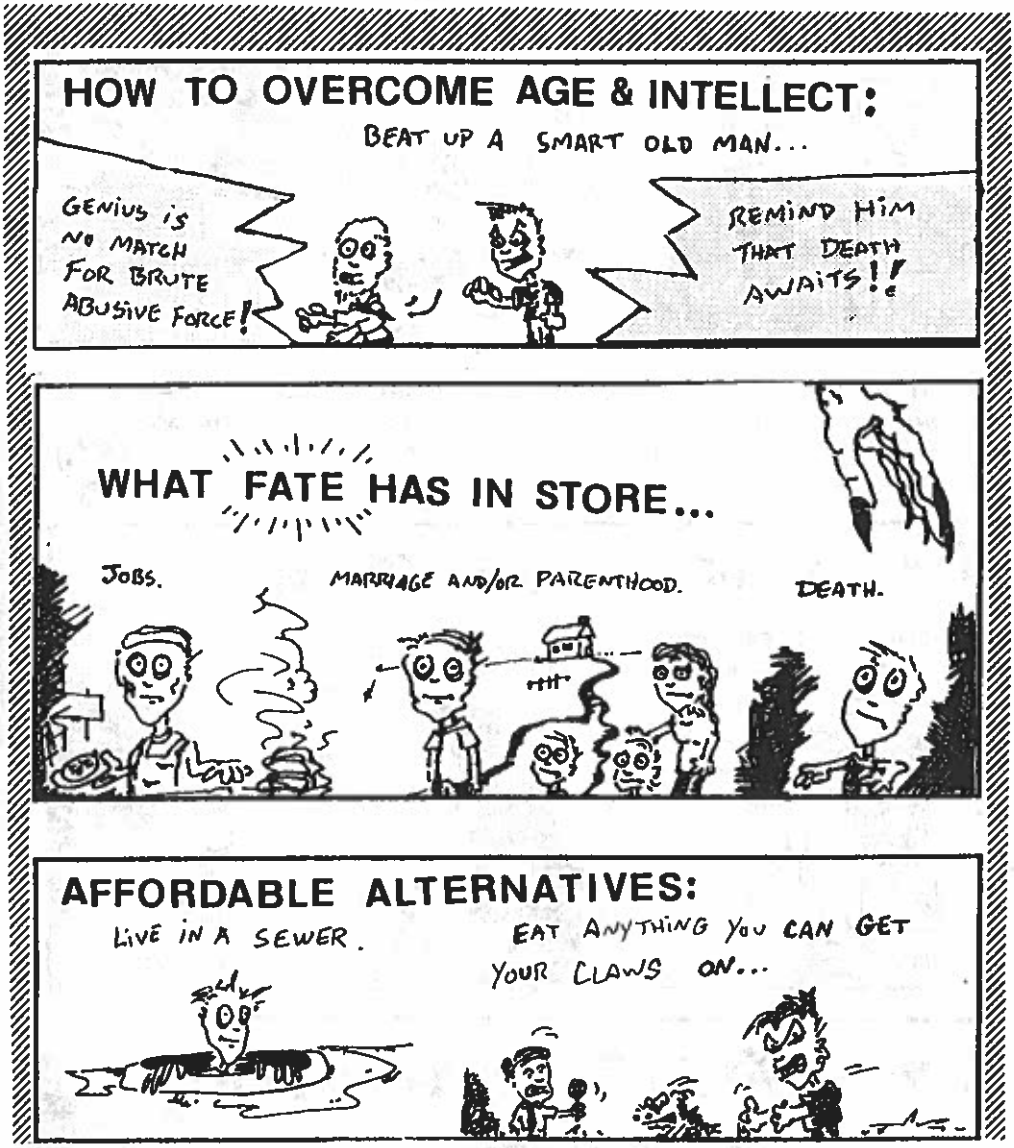
The microwave bell has rung.
I have soup cooking within.
It, apparently, is finished.
The bell tells me this
nevertheless
I will not go to it just yet.
I am not a dog.



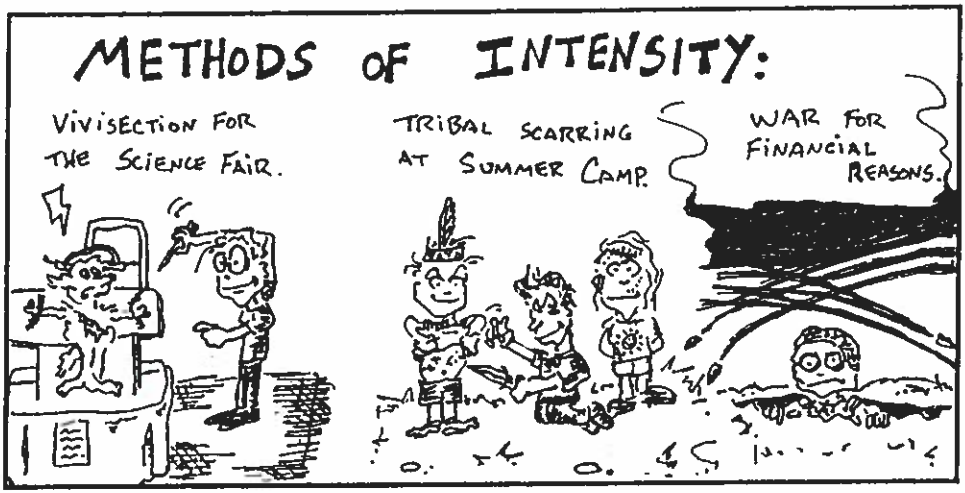


The simple pleasure of holding one's breath and watching
the head turn dark red is one that I'd forgotten.

I was stoned and climbing up the side of a convalescent home with a sword in Los Angeles late at night. Met a few people on the way back. I like visiting my brother.

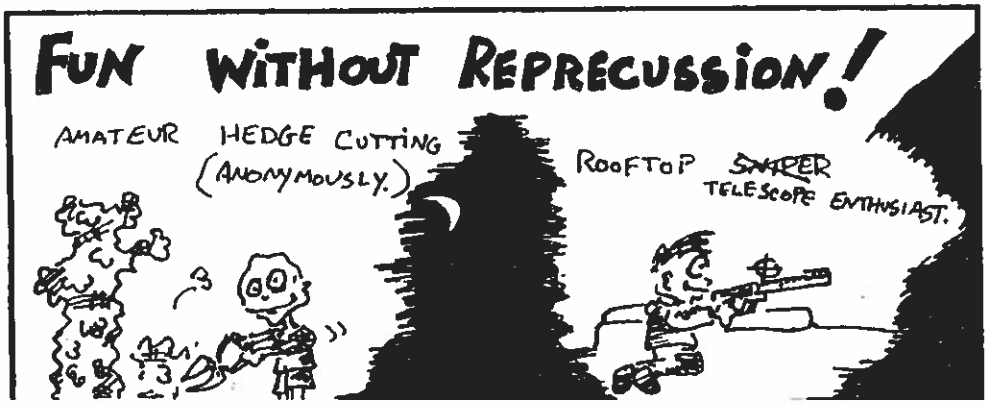


A shopping cart guy. I wonder if the guys whose job it is to retrieve missing carts for supermarkets ever encounter people who live out of them. It might make for an interesting confrontation.

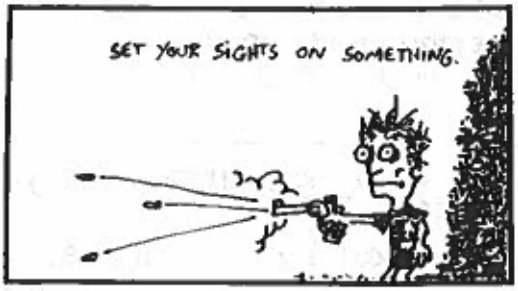


Q: IS THE HUMAN RACE DOOMED TO A TRAGIC FAILURE, COUPLED WITH CONSTANT INJUSTICES TO THE WEAK, AND ENDING WITH THE MOST EXHAUSTIVE STRANGULATION OF ITS ACTUAL SELF?

A: YES.



I'm God's gag gift to women.



If you crash,
don't burn.

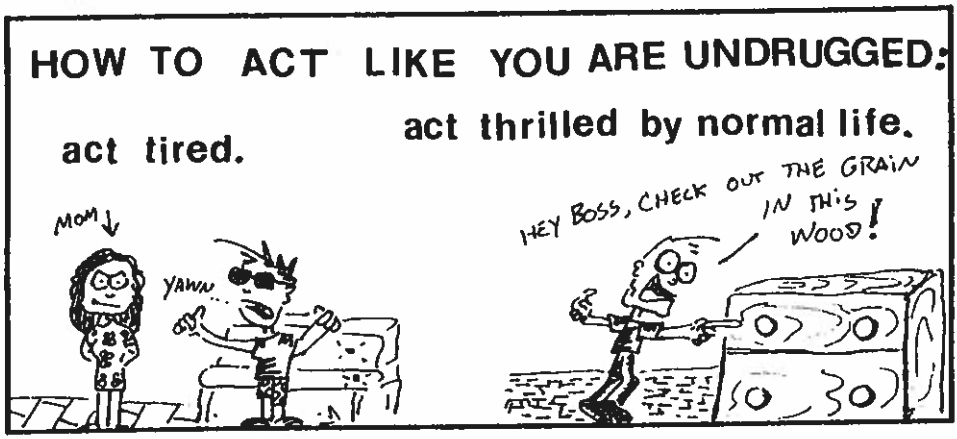
Kept my nose to the grindstone
ever since it drew blood.

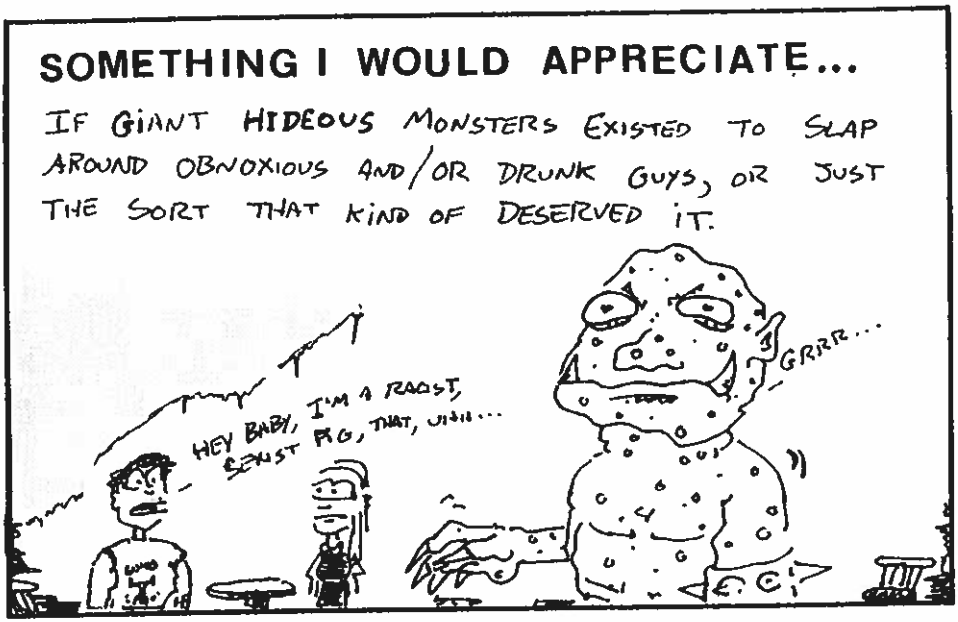
Kept my head above water.
(holy water)

I'm alone in my room.
It's Friday night.
All my friends are out
with each other.
It feels more like a Saturday night.

[redacted] and it almost woke her up.

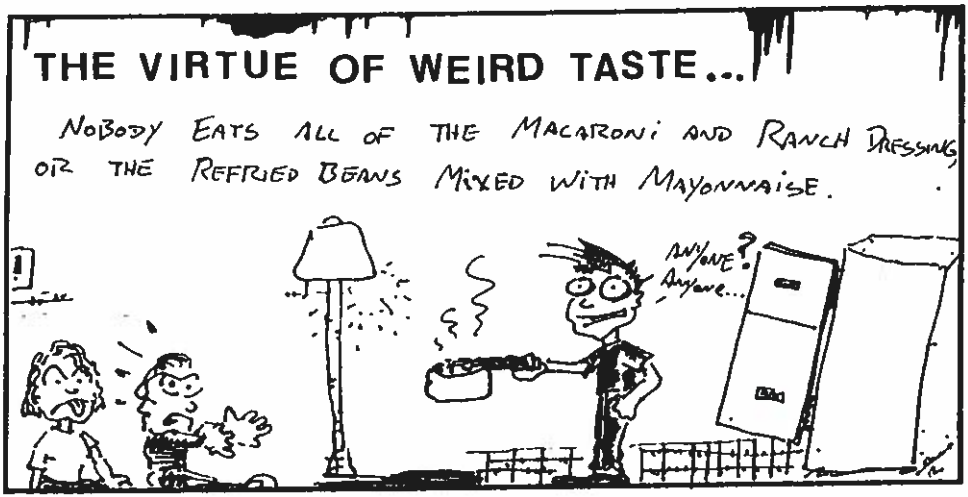
Just had a dream that my girlfriend was in the corner of my bedroom, and her face and arms were horribly burnt, in fact, featureless, but for bubbling charred flesh which she would pat with clublike stumps and motion toward her giant blackened lumpy head. I'd had fries and coffee before bed.

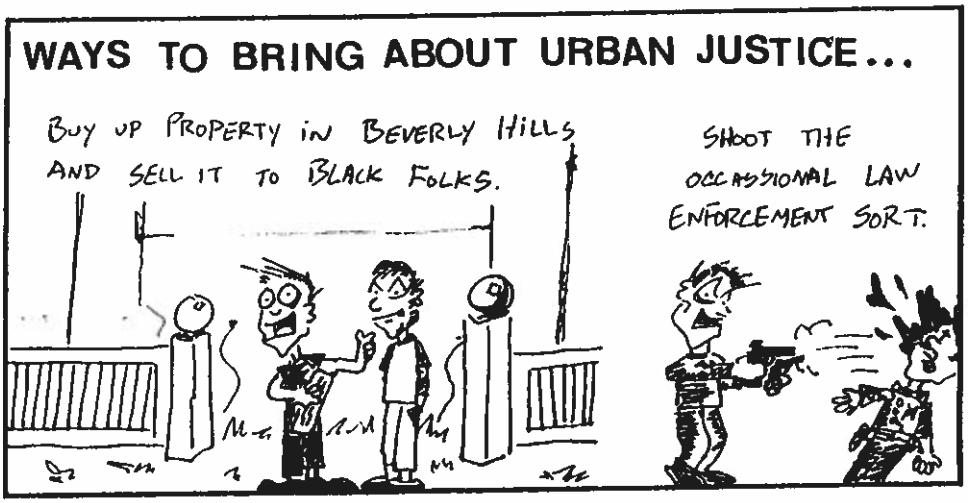




This cop lives next door to me, one of the motorcycle sort. This morning, I saw him leaving his house at the same time I was. He kissed his wife and baby, and rode off. His wife saw me point my fingers in the shape of a gun and pretend to shoot him. It looks like she doesn't have a real sense of humor.

There is a spider up on my wall.
It suddenly flinched, fell a bit, or lost its balance.
It held on to its web on the ceiling.
I was glad.
Not really happy for the spider.
But thankful
for it was above my laundry.





The idea of eating food, propigating a constant life organic cycle, makes me want to end the process. Ever feel like a subject? That may be part of it. Seemes foul and primitive, yet more foolish, prolonging something unnatural. I we truly lived in harmony with nature, we would die, and become a healthy, beneficial mulch.

If you play your cards right,
you can win someone else's money.

"Turn on the T.V."
the man who was tatooing me said.

She blows me
away.

How could there be a term like housefly?

She put her finger in my mouth and said,
"Does this make you gag?"
I said no.
She put her finger a little bit farther back.
I made a slight gagging noise.
She withdrew her bloody finger.

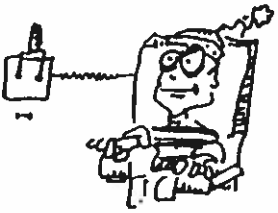
<u>The Way I Feel About People</u>
If a plane crashes
and two hundred people
are aboard
that means
that there is a two percent chance
that something bad happened.

Maybe I'm the hungriest man in the world
maybe I'm not

Saw (old girlfriend) today.
She had a few things to tell me:
She recycled
a lot of my old letters,
our mutual friends
don't feel that close to me anymore,
and I probably have a sexually transmitted disease.
Even so,
it was good to see her.

THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR:

I'M NOT IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR.



I HAVE ALL OF MY ARMS AND LEGS.

I'M NOT IN THE ARMY.

NO ONE IS PREGNANT WITH MY CHILD.

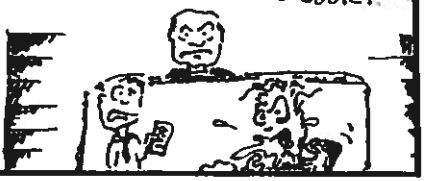
HAVEN'T ACCIDENTALLY KILLED ANYONE.

MY COFFEE CUP IS FULL.

THINGS TO AVOID DOING:

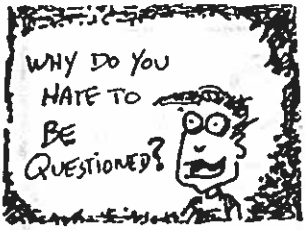
GIVING YOUR ADDRESS TO AXE MURDERERS.

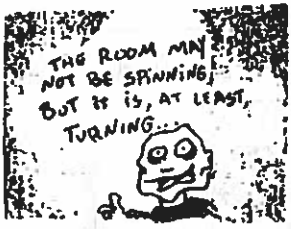
VOMITING IN TRAFFIC COURT.

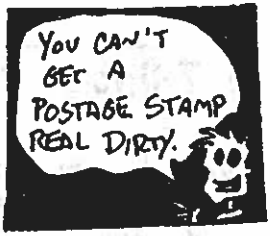


IN THE BIG SCHEME OF THINGS... IT'S ALL A BIG SCHEME.

Summer is here. This is reflected in the clothing of the people that come into the store where I work. These women in tank tops and the equivalent mess me up. I feel just too much like a James Brown with no values.







I've pissed about three times in the last five minutes, and it feels like I still have to go. I jerked off before that. Drank a pot of coffee and one beer. My dick is confused.

I knew my father
like the back of his hand.

• • •

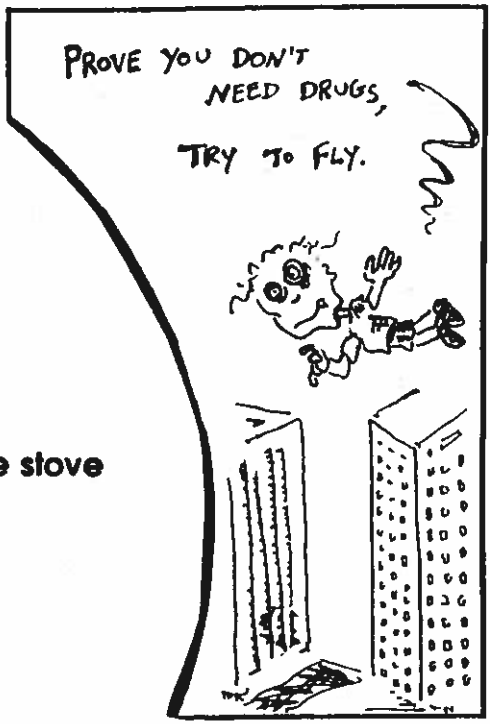
The winds of change
carry gravel.

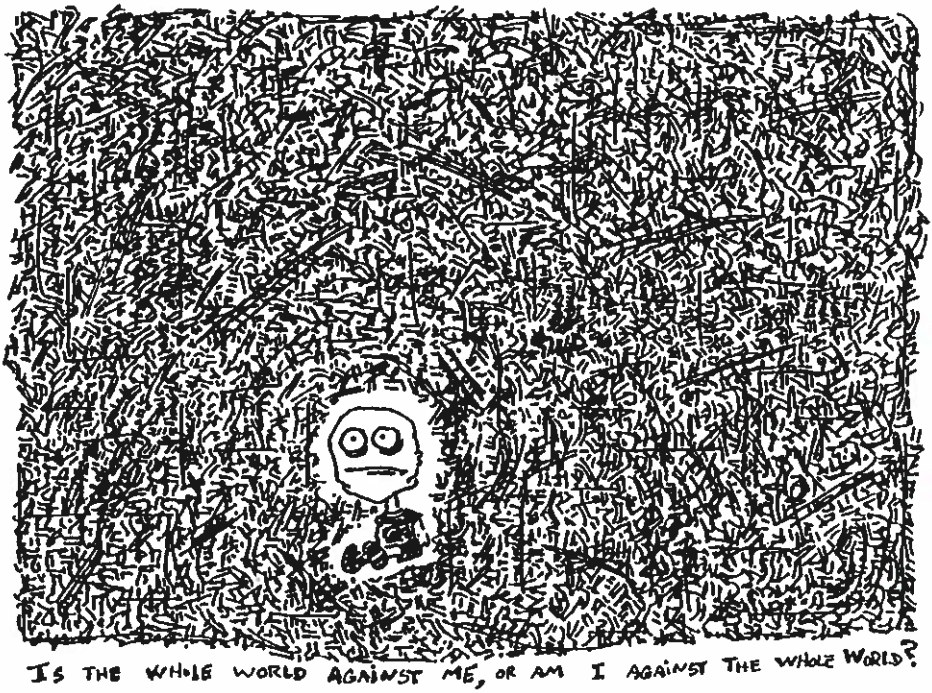
• • •

In every one of us
there is a werewolf
waiting to be brought out
by chemicals.

• • •

There is a frying pan on the stove
in it, are beans.
some, not many.
I recognize them
as <u>refried</u> beans
someone has fried them.
What does this mean?





Throw off your chains.
We need them elsewhere.

Waiting for a bus.

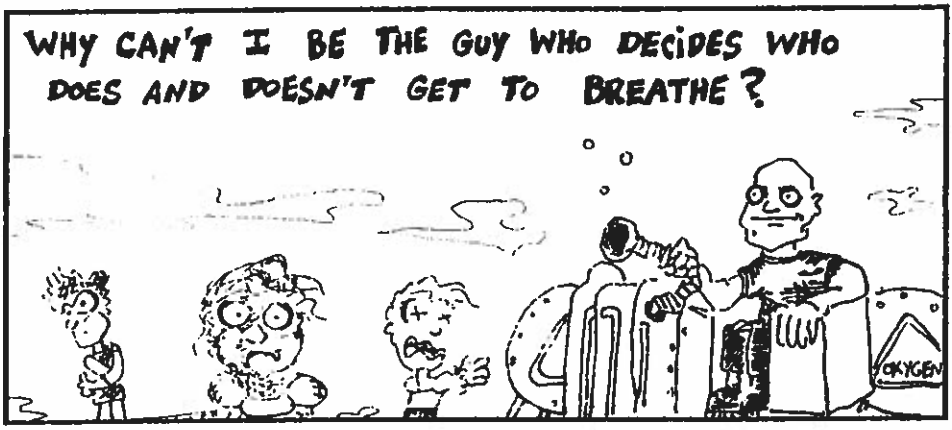
...Started going through alleys getting damn tired. Just wanted to sit down and take a catnap. Thought about sitting behind a trash dumpster. Wandering further behind these buildings, behind an auto parts store, I saw a toolshed. perfect. unlocked. I could go in and sleep for hours unnoticed. I open the door...

A burglar alarm sounds. I close the door. I think. I run around the corner and down the street a few feet. I duck into the side yard of a house in a residential neighborhood. I sit against someone's side fence, behind someone's hedge, monitoring my heartbeat. After what seemed like twenty minutes, the alarm stopped. I was glad that I shut the door. Nevertheless, a thousand ugly fantasies ran through my mind. here I was, dressed all in black, hiding next to an attempted burglary. The police or the owner of the shed would never believe I wasn't trying to rob the place. I was just waiting for the flashlight to come around the corner and shine into my face, and for me to to a world of useless explaining.

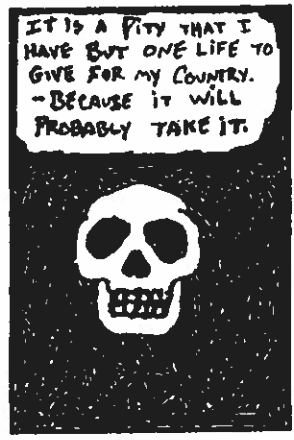
Every noise set me on edge. My mouth was dry. My entire chest wanted to burst. An air conditioner or some nearby machine kept turning off and on, making tiny "click" noises, stopping and starting my heart.

There was a dog behind the fence. After hearing him sniffing and noticing enough time had passed that evidence might seem less circumstantial, I fled. I took side streets, I woke many dogs, I made it to a 24-hour diner. Saw a cop there. Drank a whole lot of coffee and did not sleep that night.

...I should mention the possum. On top of a wall which I passed, inches away from my face, there was a giant white possum. I looked at him. He looked at me. He opened his mouth to reveal pointed teeth. He still sat there with his mouth open in a sort of grin and moved his face back and forth in a Stevie Wonder fashion. I touched his fur. He turned to me with his freaky grin, threatening because of his teeth, but not threatening because of his lack of real response. He hissed. I did this a couple more times, surprised at this thing I was looking at which looked more like something Jim Henson would've put together. He squirmed into a hedge, and I moved on.



Shopping Malls
Shopping malls
it isn't that I don't like them
they just lack something.
Fire, for example.



You are the sunshine
in my eclipse.

Was depressed
drank a lot and passed out.
It was Father's day.
Paid homage to dad.

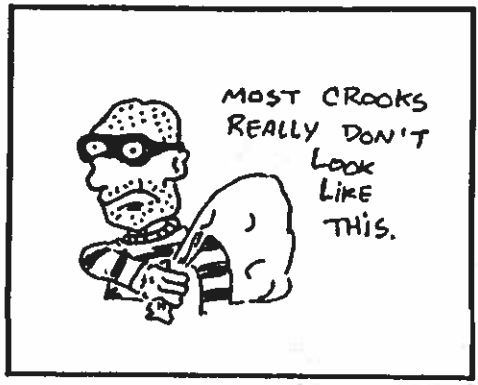
I don't know what would bother me more
knowing she is an unkind person
or knowing that she dislikes me in particular.

I saw a very old restored automobile.
The license plate said "Horseless Carriage"
Four people were pushing it.

I was taking a piss at work. I was standing in front of the toilet and went to blow my nose with toilet paper. Left my cock hanging out of my fly. Almost forgot it was "out", and walked out of the bathroom into the rest of the record store. It would have been easy not to notice my exposed dick, but that small chunk of flesh could have caused a good deal of commotion, for what it was, anyway.

I waved at her.
She looked somewhat embarassed.
This confused me.
Was I using the wrong portion of my anatomy?

The Devil, Satan, the old serpent is the prime mover behind the effort to bring this system into existence.



She said,
"I love the way you shave your chest, it's so sexy."
I said,
"What?"

DRIVING:

are signs on the freeway denoting organizations that have "adopted" portions of it. That seems kind of cool, in fact, I'm considering adopting a stretch of road and perhaps letting it fall into horrible disrepair. Gaping chasms, broken glass, nails, wood, and dead animals will decorate my part.

I saw a bumper sticker that said "Jesus loves you" and it had a "happy face" on it. I started to pay it no mind, but then realized that this "happy face" as we know it, is not really a "happy face," but a picture! Who is the picture of? You guessed it! Jesus! We never really knew what the man looked like, did we? Well, now we do! It is a picture of Jesus himself in a subliminal attempt to elicit familiarity. It (he) is all over. All over! And no one has a problem with it. Well, my eyes are opened and I know the full story. Thank you and have a nice day or god bless you, whichever.

The smoking roomates

The house is full of smoke. I don't smoke, do I? Well, I'm breathing it in (the smoke) And what is smoking, but that? I should quit smoking. It's bad for me. It's bad for all of us.

Joe Franke surrounded by admirers in a café. The glamour and attraction of powerfully charismatic evil figures illuminates the psychology of the Devil. his best loved character.

Life is a Joke

Life is a Joke

- Life's Black Blood VOL. 2 $1
- RoaD TO WAR... 1 ACT PLAYS $4
- the City $1
- 3 pamphlets (varied) $1
- Toxic Comix #1 (minicomic) 25¢

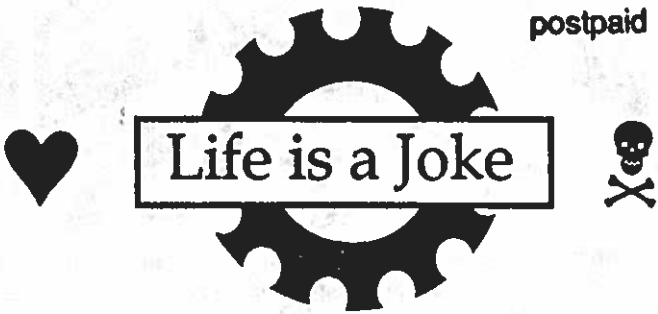
- Excuse me, can I have my soul back? $1
- Brace Yourself... by T. Bishop $1

by Dave Petretic:

- 516 PussyGirl Can't Fuck $1
- It's cold in here #2 (Blast! interview) 75¢

- Life is a Joke T-shirt L+ XL $10
  (Black, 100% cotton, design from #4)
- Life's Black Blood (varied coffee art) 75¢
- Life is a Joke #4 (nothing is sacred) $1
- Life is a Joke #5 (survival information) $1
- Life is a Joke #6 (art, religion, hate) $1
- Life is a Joke 7... $1
- Life is a Joke #3 (REPRINT) $1

postpaid



RESIDENT
2288 Hawk, Simi Valley, CA 93065

JOHN -

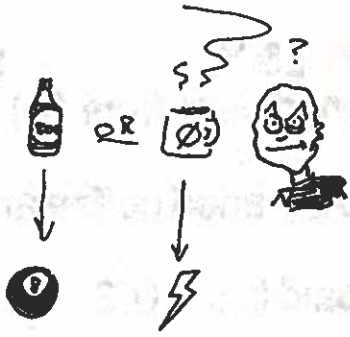
11.30.90

THANKS FOR THE $1. HERE'S #6. ATTEMPT TO DIG. WELL, I'D BE MORE THAN INTO TRADING ADS IF I CAME OUT REGULARLY. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I'LL DO ANOTHER ONE IN THE SAME FORMAT. O.K. I KNOW, SEND ME AN AD (AN ATTRACTIVE ONE IF POSSIBLE) I'LL HOLD ONTO IT UNTIL I GET SOMETHING TOGETHER. NO PROMISES. THEN ~~#~~ YOU CAN DO THE SAME WITH MINE, MAKE THE INFORMATION IMMORTAL.

I'D BE INTO SUBMITTING STUFF TO YOUR ZINE AS WELL. TELL ME SIZE PARAMETERS MAYBE CONTENT PARAMETERS, SUCH AS, ALL WRITING, ALL DRAWING, COMICS, ETC. SINCE I DO ABOUT AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF BOTH.

GLAD TO HEAR YOUR NEW INTERESTS ARE BEING INFUSED INTO THE ZINE. THAT'S THE WAY IT WORKS.

OVER + OUT.



VOID

THE CURRENT LIST OF STUFF AS OF NOVEMBER OF 90.

Life is a Joke

Joe Franke

Life is a Joke #4 (nothing is sacred) $1
Life is a Joke #5 (survival information) $1
Life is a Joke #6 (art, religion, hate) $1

3 pamphlets $1
Toxic Comix #1 (minicomic) 25¢

Excuse me, can I have my soul back?
by T. Bishop $2

516 PussyGirl Can't Fuck
by Dave Petretic $2
AND

↑ CANADIAN IMPORTS ↓

It's cold in here #2 (Blast! interview) 75¢

Life is a Joke T-shirt L& XL $10
(Black,100% cotton, design from #4)

Soon- Life's Black Blood (varied coffee art) 75¢

All prices postpaid in the U.S.

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